

Backcountry Ski Equipment Checklist

I. Individual Items

A. Ski Equipment

1. Skis and Bindings

They are two ways to go, telemark or randonee type gear. Randonee gear is also sometimes called alpine touring gear. For either approach you need metal edged skis. Current trend is fatter, shorter, and more sidecut.

2. Ski Boots

Most people now use lightweight plastic boots – the boots are specific to either telemark bindings or randonee bindings.

3. Climbing skins

G3 and Ascension are popular brands. Voile snakeskins are not acceptable.

4. Ski Poles

Adjustable length. Black Diamond Flicklock Poles are cost effective and work great.

B. Other Equipment

1. Backpack

Internal frame, needs to be big because winter clothing is bulky, something like 4500 to 6000 cubic inches.

2. Day Pack or Fanny pack

Needed for day trips. Many large backpacks have tops that convert to a big fanny pack and this is also acceptable.

3. Sleeping bag

Advice regarding appropriate temperature rating varies. Inside the huts it is warm and a three season, 20°F, bag is more than enough. Some people take a winter mountaineering bag rated to -20°F or -30°F in case you spend the night outside in an emergency. The trade off is weight, bulk, and expense.

4. Headlamp with Extra Batteries

The new LED varieties are nice because they burn many hours on one set of batteries

5. Hydration System

Water bottles – Bring at least two, wide mouth, 1 liter containers. Nalgene brand is popular. Many people like using a camelback type system. Some people bring a small lightweight thermos.

6. Sunglasses and Goggles

7. Sunscreen and Lip balm

8. Watch

9. Toiletries / wash cloth / small towel

10. Reading Material

11. Pocket knife

12. Earplugs

The huts have communal sleeping areas. If someone nearby is a loud snorer, these can be lifesaving.

C. Clothing

1. Base Layer

Long Underwear, Top & Bottom – Moisture transporting wool, synthetic, or blended layer worn under shell pants during warmer conditions, or under intermediate layers in extremely cold conditions. Examples are polypropylene, Capilene, and bi-component DriClime.

2. Intermediate Lower Layers

Traditional wool pants or fleece tights/pants than can be worn alone or under shell pants for average Colorado conditions. Synthetics include 100 weight microfleece or Polartec 100 stretch.

3. Intermediate Upper Layers

Midweight or expedition-weight fleece, wool, or blended shirt or pullover, or vest.

4. Heavier Insulating Layers

200 to 300 weight fleece, piles, or wool sweaters, or full zip jackets; useful in very cold conditions or for lunch breaks and trips to the outhouse.

5. Shell Jacket

Waterproof breathable (Gortex) or soft shell (Schoeller). Should have a generous cut that goes overall all of you layers and has superior venting capability, pockets large enough for gear (including skins), and a hood for blizzard conditions.

6. Shell Pants

Waterproof breathable (Gortex) or soft shell (Schoeller).

7. Knickers/Pants/Tights

8. Windbreaker or Windshirt

9. Super-light simple windshirt for warmer days, and in colder temperatures during aerobic workouts.

10. Socks

2-3 pair, wool or wool blend is good

11. Handwear

Mitten Shell, Wool or Pile Mittens, Gloves, Glove liners - A versatile system of layers and shells works best. Having options of thicker and thinner layers allow you to adjust to the changing weather conditions.

12. Wool or Fleece Hat

13. Visor cap

Ball cap, providing a bit of shade over the eyes and face.

14. Balaclava or neck gaiter

The ability to cover the entire neck and face is an absolute necessity.

15. Leg gaiters

They will keep your pants dry, legs warmer and the snow out of your boots. They should be 12-16" high. Outdoor Research is a good brand. If using ski pants with built-in snow cuffs, you can do without the gaiters.

16. Hut Wear

a) T-Shirt

b) Light pants or shorts

c) Hut Slippers or Booties

Shoes for hut wear - Down booties are popular. It is nice to have something easy to slip on and off for trips to the outhouse.

D. Food

This is a whole subject in itself covered in another document

II. Group Items:

A. Wax kit

Assorted kick wax, glide wax, skin wax, scraper, and cork.

B. Camera

C. Navigational Equipment

Altimeter, maps, guidebook, compass, GPS, binoculars, cell phone.

D. Ensolite or Foam Pad

To keep you bottom warm when sitting and for use during emergency bivouacs. Can also be used as a splint.

E. First Aid / Emergency Supplies

F. Emergency kit:

Signal mirror, Duct tape, Space Blanket, Duct Tape, Candle, Webbing and Parachute cord, Leatherman tool

G. Repair kit

H. Blister Kit

I. First-aid kit

J. Shovel

K. Matches and Lighter

L. Stove and Pot

M. Bivouac sack

N. Extra Clothing

Down Parka, Gloves, Hat, and Goggles